



March 27, 2024

Chair Pamela Beidle
Senate Finance Committee
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
Position: **Support**

Testimony in Favor of Maryland Entertainment Council Alterations (HB1487)

Before the Senate Finance Committee
On behalf of the Maryland Entertainment Industry Council

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier and members of the Senate Finance Committee, **the Maryland Entertainment Industry Council (MEIC) testifies in support of House Bill 1487**, which makes key changes to the MEIC's structure that better allow us to execute our statutory objectives and responsibilities.

The MEIC was established by statute in 2023 to analyze Maryland's assets, opportunities, and position within the entertainment industry, including the film, television, music, and gaming sectors. The MEIC's mission includes identifying tax policies and incentives that can be leveraged to attract film production to the state, coordinating existing State agencies to support the entertainment industry, and developing a strategic plan for Maryland to become a national leader in film, television, and other entertainment sectors.

In addition to codifying the council, HB1487 makes three important adjustments to the MEIC. First, the bill formally changes our name from the Maryland Entertainment Council to the Maryland Entertainment Industry Council. The new name not only reflects our council's objectives more precisely but also distinguishes us from the Maryland Economic Council (MEC), with which we work closely. The new name and acronym have been used colloquially by council members and state officials for months, so HB1487 simply formalizes the transition.

Second, the bill expands the MEIC's membership to include the Maryland Secretary of Commerce, Maryland Secretary of Labor, Maryland Secretary of Housing and Community Development (or their designees), and up to 12 additional gubernatorial appointees with experience in film, television, and entertainment. The MEIC welcomes the addition of these members. We believe that their expertise will broaden the council's perspectives and help the current council members develop a stronger understanding of the steps Maryland can take to become more competitive in attracting and retaining entertainment business.

Third, the bill removes the June 30, 2025 sunset for the MEIC and extends the deadline for its final report from September 1st to December 1st of this year. Given that the months-long SAG-AFTRA and WGA strikes significantly delayed the appointment of MEIC members and council

set-up, the MEIC could not meet officially until February 9 of this year. As a result, the MEIC currently faces a difficult timeline to complete its report. Extending the deadline to December gives us proper time to produce a more thorough report than would otherwise be possible. Additionally, removing the council's 2025 sunset allows us to monitor the implementation of our report's recommendations, and offer guidance to state officials as needed in the following years.

To summarize, HB1487 makes a small but necessary name change for the council and greatly improves our ability to carry out the MEIC's responsibilities by expanding our membership and extending our timeframe. In turn, these alterations will put the MEIC in a better position to advise the Governor on how the state can best advance its entertainment industry to compete with national leaders like California and Georgia, subsequently generating millions of dollars of business for Maryland.

For those reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on HB1487. Thank you for your consideration of this measure.